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TALKING POINTS FOR WORLD-WIDE BRIEFING

Iran: Internal Situation; Relations with USSR

Six months ago our concern was over the potential appearance of a vacuum in Iran which could be exploitable by the Soviets. That situation has not changed, but is no less serious.

- The Khomeini regime has at least temporarily thwarted its domestic opponents and has gained the initiative in its war with Iraq.

While relations between Iran and the USSR remain somewhat strained, there are increasing pressures within Tehran to expand trade and other relations with Communist countries and their clients.

- Because of Iran's hard currency crunch, Tehran has sought to barter its oil for arms (ammunition and spare parts) and industrial goods, primarily with Eastern Europe -- much more accustomed to barter arrangements than the West and in need of oil. Additionally, North Korea will begin supplying T-62 tanks, and Libya has already sent 100 T-55 tanks.
- Iran, moreover, believes that its greatest threat comes from the US and that the USSR is a "lesser Satan." Its leaders appear confident that they can control their relations with Moscow.
- There are an estimated 2,000 Soviet advisers in Iran, roughly the same number as under the Shah. [REDACTED] 25X1
[REDACTED] recently told a Western diplomat that there were 25X1
200 Soviet military advisers in Iran. Reportedly East German and Cuban military advisers are in Iran as well.

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- The Soviets continue to give strong public support to the Khomeini regime and continue to stress the threat to Iran from the US.

There is a potential for improvement in relations between the USSR and Iran.

- The Iranian regime seems increasingly willing to turn to the Soviets despite bilateral problems.
- Some of the recent delegations going between Moscow and Tehran apparently were made at Iranian initiative. They suggest a political willingness in Tehran to overlook bilateral problems when the regime believes it can use the Soviets.
- Possible security assistance, while difficult to precisely verify, it is at least plausible. Soviet assistance directly - or indirectly - to the regime could account for some of its successes in this field. [REDACTED] unconfirmed reporting of arrival of 12 KGB officers in Tehran for security assistance.

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